

Greensands Medical Practice provides a range of primary medical services from its semi-rural locations at Brook End, Potton, Sandy in Bedfordshire and the Medical Centre, Stocks Lane, Gamlingay in Cambridgeshire.

Gamlingay is 18 miles from the nearest hospital. There are very few public transport links to these hospitals. Providing services close to the community addresses the inequalities experienced by those without private transport

The practice serves a population of approximately 11,800 patients with higher than average populations of both males and females aged 40 to 74 years. There are lower than average populations of babies and patients aged 15 to 39 years

Our Practice list size per full time GP equivalent is 2094 patients. This compares to a national average of 1731 patients.

The clinical staff team consists of three female GP partners, four male GP partners, one nurse prescriber, one minor illness nurse, two practice nurses and two health care assistants. The team is supported by a practice manager and a team of administrative staff.

There is a dispensary at both sites that provides medicine for patients who live more than one mile from a pharmacy.

We have a current part-time GP vacancy, which we have advertised for, but have not been able to successfully recruit to date.

Recent research from the King's Fund exposed the spiralling crisis in primary care with the number of consultations having increased by 15% over the past five years. The HSCIC (Health and Social Care Information Centre) revealed recently that the number of full-time-equivalent GPs, excluding locums, working in primary care in England is thought to have decreased from just over 34,700 in 2014 to 34,055 in 2016.

The study, which analysed 30 million contacts between GPs and patients from 177 practices, also revealed a 13% growth in face-to-face consultations and a 63% increase in telephone appointments over five years. The biggest increase in consultations was among the over-85 age group — with appointments rising by 28%— who are more likely to have more than one chronic condition, making doctors' workloads more complex.

Consultation rates have been steadily rising over the past years and latest figures (2013/14) reveal a figure of 8.3 (Nuffield Trust March 2015) consultations a year for the average patient. Thus the practice expects having to provide room and manpower for many thousands of consultations a year.

We are fully aware of several building developments planned for Potton and Gamlingay. With an average occupancy of 2.6 per dwelling, this will have a major impact on the current and planned service provision of the local population.

The surgery in its current state will not be able to accommodate this increase in numbers of patients and has no room to accommodate further staff, nor an increased range of services.

Our site in Potton is now land locked and we are unable to extend Potton further. Without alterations to the premises, existing services will suffer since there is rising demand for activity due to the shifts in service provision as detailed in the Health and Social Care Act 2013. There have already been cutbacks to services accommodated at Greensands Medical Practice in the past due to lack of room.

Section 106 funding from developments in Gamlingay has been allocated for sole use by Greensands Medical Practice in Potton and Gamlingay on behalf of South Cambridgeshire Council. There is also an additional allocation of Section 106 funding in Bedfordshire available from Central Bedfordshire Council. These funds are available for internal alterations to be made to create an additional treatment room/consulting room space.

We have submitted plans recently to obtain the Section 106 funding to modernise our existing premises, however, there are processes to follow with NHS England to acquire this money and we are currently in negotiation with them. Current regulations state that Practices have to pay for invoices relating to any developments in advance of being reimbursed the Section 106 funding, which is held by NHS England on behalf of the Practice. This is not financially feasible for the Practice.

Our plans will meet increasing demand for existing services which will not be sustainable in the long term without investment in expansion. These include Minor Surgery, Minor ailment clinics, Vasectomy clinics, Coil fittings and Implants, Phlebotomy, Minor injury, Antenatal care, Counselling, Community Mental Health Services, Gynaecology, Teaching, Research, Access targets, Community based services, Near Patient testing and Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening.

This will also ensure that the challenges of the new Health and Social Care Act are met, and that several strategic initiatives are addressed. To this end, we propose the following initiatives: installation of additional outreach clinics, ENT with Audiology, Dermatology, Psychiatry, Musculoskeletal Practitioner, Physiotherapy, Ophthalmology, Ultrasound, Teaching – inviting teaching of medical students

Our plans would greatly contribute to maintain and improve service provision to existing and expected patients, enhance patient access to services, move services closer to the community and thereby contribute to the specific aims and aspirations of the NHS under the new Health and Social Care Act.

Bringing services closer into the community will contribute to meeting the challenges of ambitious targets of efficiency savings the NHS faces over the next years. Greensands Medical Practice has a substantial number of elderly patients who have difficulties reaching secondary care services due to the remoteness of the location and non-existing public transport links. Bringing services into the community will improve access and usage of these services considerably for a vulnerable group of service users.

The Practice are looking at a variety of options to futureproof services, and we are currently undergoing a trial with an experienced Emergency Care Practitioner working for the surgery who can assist in home visits. We are also looking to expand the roles of our minor illness Nurses. We have implemented telephone triage which ensures that patients are seen by the right person at the right time.

The Practice is currently working closely with neighbouring Practices on the “Working Together” agenda to enable collaboration of services to benefit all patients.